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Illinois Attorney General
LISA MADIGAN



December 18, 2007

Dear Honorable Members of the Illinois Legislature:

As Chairman of the Crime Victim and Witness Notification Advisory Committee, it is my pleasure to provide you with an update on the operation of the Illinois Automated Victim Notification System (IL AVN). The Crime Victim and Witness Notification Advisory Committee (AVN Committee) was created by statute to assist the Attorney General in the implementation and use of IL AVN. (725 ILCS 120/8.5(g)). The AVN Committee is charged with reviewing the status and operation of the system and reporting to the General Assembly in November of each year. Please see Attachment A for a list of the 2007 AVN Committee Members.

What is IL AVN?

As you know, IL AVN is a toll-free, bilingual telephone service – available 24 hours a day, seven days a week – that provides information about changes in offender custody and case status. This statewide service protects and empowers crime victims. IL AVN also assists law enforcement, prosecutors and court personnel by notifying victims of crime of changes in an offender's custody status and upcoming court dates. These notifications are required under the Illinois Crime Victim Bill of Rights and the Illinois Constitution (725 ILCS 120/4). As intended, IL AVN assists those agencies required by law to provide information and notifications to victims of crime as criminal cases progress through the justice system—from charging to incarceration.

IL AVN provides notification by establishing a computer interface with county jail booking systems, the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and circuit court clerks. IL AVN transfers information from these sources to a centralized communications center, which, in turn, generates regular updates for registered users.

Currently, 101 Sheriffs representing 93 jails statewide, 97 Circuit Court Clerks and the Illinois Department of Corrections have signed intergovernmental agreements securing their participation in IL AVN. Please see Attachment B identifying the participating sheriff and circuit court clerks.

How does someone register for ILAVN?

Victims, and other interested parties, can register with ILAVN through a toll-free number: 1-866-5-NOTIFY (1-866-566-8439), (TTY-1-877-502-2423) or online at www.vinelink.com.

Registered parties can choose to receive notification of the following events: the offender's current custody status, current court case status, any change in the offender's custody and changes in the status of the court case.

Registered users are asked to select a four-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) that allows the system to monitor when the intended recipient has received notification of the requested event. If the correct PIN is not entered, the system will continue to make notification calls as often as every 30 minutes for 24 hours. At any point in the process, users may connect to a live operator for assistance. Registered users can also receive e-mail notification through VINELINK.

How much information is available through ILAVN system?

ILAVN has access to custody information for approximately 144,290 offenders and case status information on over 965,345 open court cases. To date, ILAVN has provided information to 79,451 registered users. Currently, the system is providing information to 58,785 active registered users for automatic notification of inmate release or change in court status. The system handles approximately 24,500 calls per month, including calls into the system and outgoing notification calls made to registered users. Please see Attachment C highlighting the number of incoming and outgoing calls.

Information from ILAVN is also available through an on-line resource, VINELINK, www.vinelink.com. VINELINK gives victims, witnesses and interested parties the opportunity to register for notification via the internet and conduct offender custody searches from available data. This service is completely secure and free-of-charge. In the last year, ILAVN has experienced a tremendous growth in VINELINK registrations and searches. Over 39,193 email notifications and more than 672,732 VINELINK searches for offender custody status information have been made through the VINELINK service. Please see Attachment D highlighting the use of VINELINK to access ILAVN information.

What improvements have been made to the ILAVN system?

Until recently, email notification and internet searches were only possible to obtain information about the offender's custody status. In FY 2007, Court case notification and searches became available. This addition gives the victims the ability to use the internet to obtain information about their case.

Additionally, Attorney General Madigan's office provides free training on the effective use of the IL AVN system and provides free brochures, fact sheets and other materials.

If you have any questions about IL AVN, need free brochures or other resource materials or would like more information about how the system works to serve victims and witnesses of violent crime in your district, please do not hesitate to contact Mike Bastien at 618/529-6405 or Elizabeth Scholz at 217/223-2221.

Once again, on behalf of the AVN Committee, I would like to congratulate Attorney General Madigan for a job well done on behalf of Illinois crime victims.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Greg Sullivan".

Greg Sullivan, Chairman
Crime Victim and
Witness Notification Advisory Committee